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# The Ultimate Stray Kids FAN PACK

FOLLOW THEIR JOURNEY FROM K-POP ROOKIES TO GLOBAL SUPERSTARS

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**10 Exclusive STRAY KIDS STICKERS**

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**THE EARLY DAYS • SOLO PROFILES • ALBUMS & TOURS**

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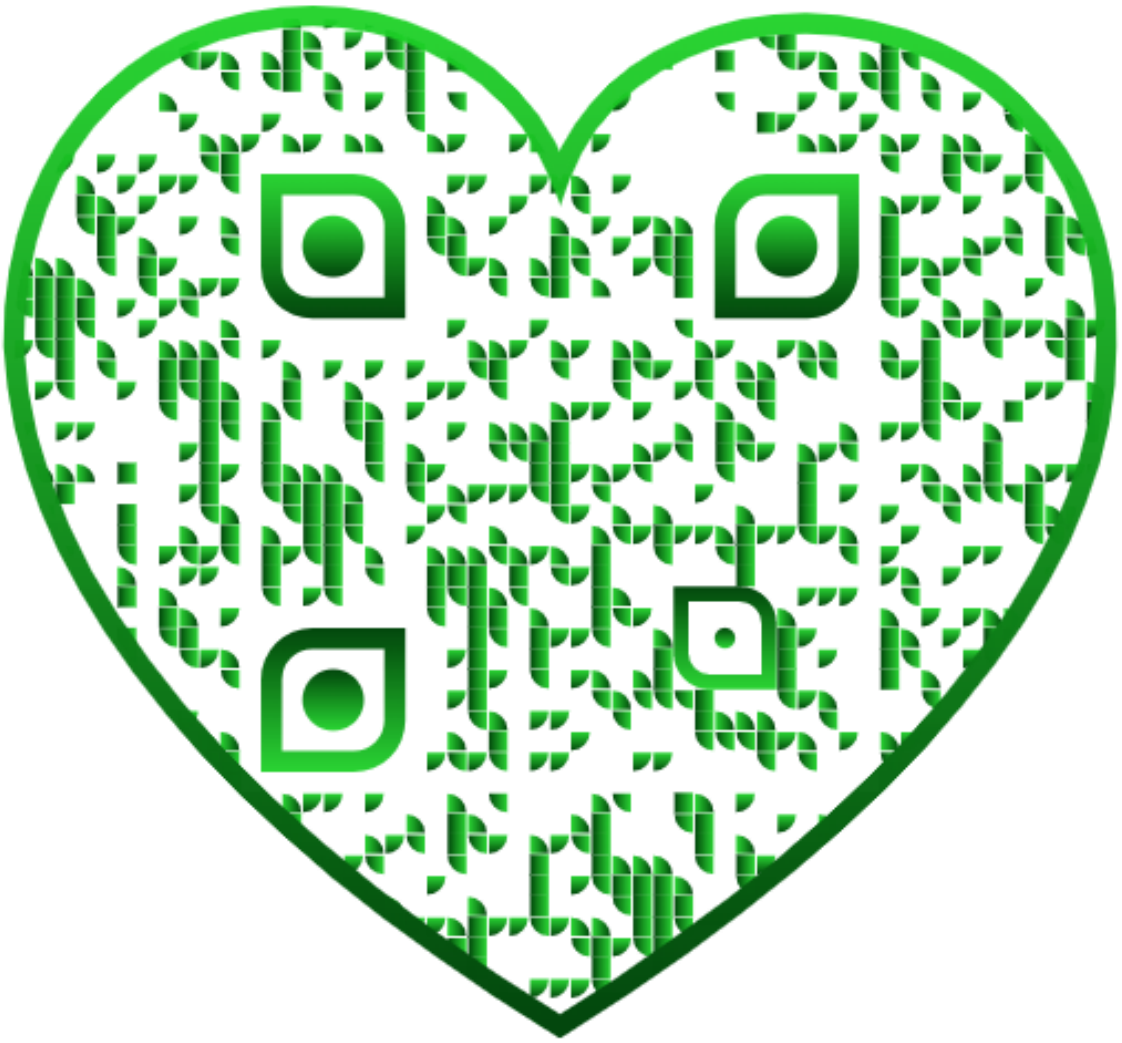

# WELCOME

**Known for their down-to-earth personalities, strong connection with their fans, and self-produced music, Stray Kids have taken the K-pop world by storm since their debut in 2018. In the Ultimate Fan's Guide to Stray Kids, you will learn everything you need to know to become a true 'Stay', from individual profiles of the band members to their wide-ranging discography. So, what are you waiting for? Join us as we follow Stray Kids on their journey from K-pop rookies to global superstars.**

©Getty

# The Ultimate Stray Kids FAN PACK

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# STRAY KIDS REALITY SHOW

**What were all the cool Korean kids doing between 17 October and 19 December 2017? Watching the only show in town, the ten-episode *Stray Kids*, which launched nine male idols into competition with the powerful media agency, JPY Entertainment. The goal for each guy was to survive all ten episodes and make it to the final "debut" – or first performance – and be accepted into the new group, named after the show itself. The show had a TV and online audience ready to go, as its predecessor, *Sixteen* – which led to the debut of the girl group Twice – had been a smash hit two years previously. That didn't make it any easier for our nine competitors, who performed their own songs and teamed up for missions that tested their abilities. Although Lee Min Ho and Lee Felix were eliminated partway through the season, they were brought back for the nine-man debut – with the legendary idol Park Jin Young saying; "I still see lacking parts in both of you – but when all nine perform, the expressions are alive. Congratulations, Stray Kids will debut as nine!"**

©Getty

# Bang Chan

**Every boy band needs a senior member to keep the troops in check, right? For Stray Kids it's Christopher Bahng, better known as Bang Chan, born on 3 October 1997 as the eldest of three children in Seoul, South Korea. As a kid, Chan moved to Sydney, Australia, where his family moved homes several times, allowing him an insight into life across the country.**

**An athletic youth like all the future members of Stray Kids, he took dance classes including ballet and modern dance, played sports and won awards for his expertise at swimming.**

**Chan passed his first audition for JYP Entertainment in 2010, when he was only 13, scoring big at a local event in Australia. Moving back to Korea, he trained with JYP for seven years alongside friends such as GOT7, Day6 and Twice. His band, 3RACHA, also featured Han and Changbin: they uploaded their first mixtape to SoundCloud in 2017 – and when JYPE launched the nine-member 'Male Group Project' TV show the same year, there could only be one leader. Hats off to the boss!**

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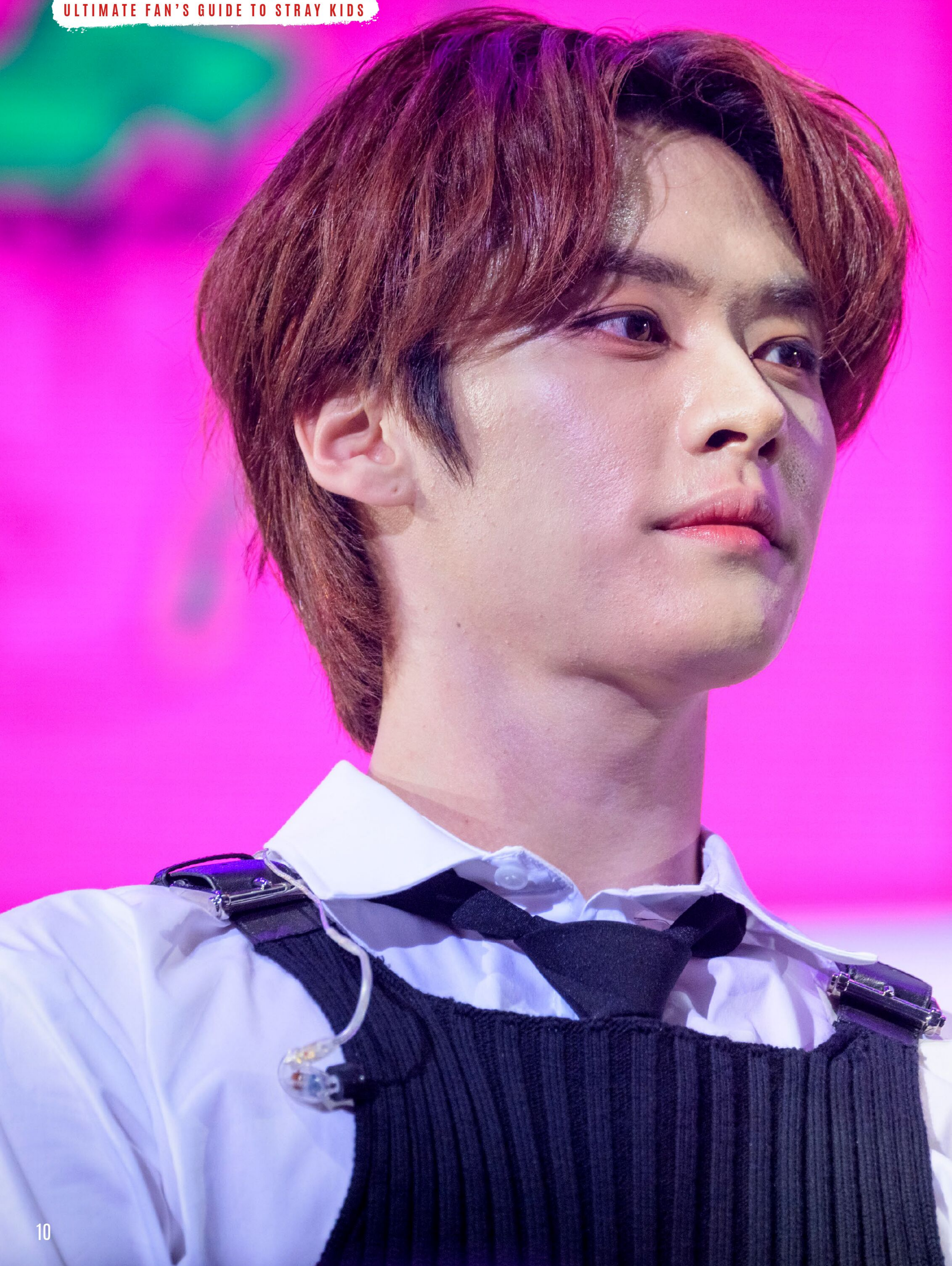

# Lee Know

**Lee Know, whose real name is Lee Min Ho, was born on 25 October 1998 in the city of Gimpo, South Korea: you'll know him as Stray Kids' main dancer. After graduating from Gimpo Jeil Technical High School, one of his early jobs was as a backup dancer for the mighty BTS on one of their Japanese tours. Along the way he found time to acquire black belts in karate and taekwondo – so don't spill his soju, whatever you do – as well as three cats, Soon-ie, Doong-ie and Dori. You can see him on YouTube in a National Geographic documentary about K-pop, filmed in 2014 before he was a star. Where do the years go?**

©Getty

# Changbin

**Rapper, sub vocalist and 3RACHA member Seo Chang Bin, who we know just as Changbin, was born on 11 August 1999 in Yongin, where he attended Bora High School, learned the violin and won a prize in a maths competition. Changbin is a big admirer of G-Dragon of Big Bang, as well as of the actor Park Seo-joon: he would like each of them to portray each other's life story on film. His bandmates call him Mogi (mosquito), Jingjingie (whiny), Teokjaengie (chin) or just Binnie, and he likes to spend time with his Munchlax plushie, Gyu, which reports say he can't sleep without. Hey, even K-pop stars need their home comforts...**

©Getty

# Hyunjin

**Hyunjin, born Hwang Hyun Jin on 20 March 2000, grew up in the Seongnae-dong neighbourhood of Gangdong-gu in Seoul. He's often called by his nicknames Jinnie, Jin and the Prince, and supposedly even Drama Llama and Night Fury, but sometimes goes by the English name Sam, which he used when visiting Las Vegas as a kid. When he was young he had a pet dog, and wrote a song called 'Little Star' in 2020 in tribute to the beloved pup. Hyunjin first stepped into the limelight when JYP Entertainment spotted him out shopping with his mum, believe it or not: nowadays he runs three online shows, *Hyunjin's Practice Room* (for dance moves), *Hyunjin's Counseling Center* (advice for fans) and *Hyune's Holiday* (a daily diary).**

©Getty

# Han

**Stray Kids' lead vocalist and main rapper Han, who was born on 14 September 2000 in the city of Incheon, sometimes goes by the name Peter Han – although his friends call him Squirrel or Quokka, the latter being a small Australian marsupial. We first saw and heard Han in action as a member of 3RACHA, with whom he released the famous mixtape *J:/2017*, as well as the *3Days* and *Horizon* EPs in 2017, in addition to the more recent 'Start Line' and 'Carpe Diem' singles. If you want to see more of what Han gets up to on a daily basis, though, check out his guest appearance on Episode 32 of last year's Lee Mujin Service show and his own vlogs, where he talks us through his daily life.**

©Getty

# Felix

**Strewth, mate – this Stray Kid's an Aussie! Lee Yongbok, who we know better as Felix, was born on 15 September 2000 in Sydney, Australia, honing his rapping, dancing and beatboxing skills as a youth. He goes by many nicknames – including Bbujikseu, Jikseu, Haengbok, Innocent Boy and Sunshine – but is better known as those new to Stray Kids as 'the one with the deep voice'. His grasp of the low notes lends depth to the overall vocal sound of the group, and you'll also hear Felix playing the piano and doing a pretty decent beatboxing performance, too. Check out his *Sunshine* vlog series for more info on what he gets up to when he's not on stage.**

©Getty

# Seungmin

**Kim Seung Min, who we call simply Seungmin, was born in Seoul on 22 September 2000, and wanted to be a professional baseball player as a kid. Hey, didn't we all? In fourth grade he spent some time in Los Angeles, where he learned English to a high standard, and for that reason he was an MC for the *After School Club show* in 2018. In more recent years he was roommates with Felix and Han, who came up with at least some of his many nicknames – among them Snail, Cherry, Cherry Dog, Puppy and Dandy Boy. He's done three solo broadcasts – *Puppy Cat School* and *Seungmin's Small But Certain Happiness* (both since 2019) and *Ee-Ddoh-Ah-Seung* (since 2020).**

©Getty

# I.N

**The maknae (or youngest member) of Stray Kids is Yang Jeong In, who everyone calls I.N – although you'll hear him also called Desert Fox, Spoon Worm Yang, and our favourite: Bean Worm. Born on 8 February 2001, I.N was a model when he was seven years old, going on to start pursuing music as a possible career when he was a student at the School Of Performing Arts in Seoul. When he isn't recording his online show, *The Youngest's Private Life*, or his vlogs for the Stray Kids YouTube channel, he watches the food programme *Mukbang* and sings trot, which is the traditional Korean music style that has been revitalised by several young singers in recent years.**

©Getty

# Woojin

## (EX-MEMBER)

**Kim Woo Jin, born on 8 April 1997 in Daejeon, was a popular member of Stray Kids from the band's formation until his sudden departure on 27 October 2019, when JYP Entertainment announced: "Woojin, who has been with Stray Kids as a member until this time, has left the group due to personal circumstances and terminated his exclusive contract. We apologise for any inconvenience this may have caused many fans."**

**Rumours circulated about the reasons for his departure, and in September 2020, a Brazilian fan accused Woojin of behaving inappropriately towards her: however, a police investigation determined that the accusation was false. Woojin launched a solo career with 10x Entertainment, releasing a solo EP called *The Moment: A Minor* in August 2021. When he's not recording for his YouTube channel, he participates in the Japanese martial art kendo and can often be seen at events such as Seoul Fashion Week, pictured here.**

©Getty

# MIXTAPE

On 8 January 2018, JYP Entertainment released Stray Kids' pre-debut EP, *Mixtape*, designed to show fans what the new band could do while they were preparing their first full release, which turned out to be the *I Am NOT* mini album. Led off by its compelling first single 'Hellevator', *Mixtape* was promoted by JYPE as "full of raw and untapped potential" and sold 45,249 physical copies. Its seven songs – the lead single plus 'Beware', 'Spread My Wings', 'YAYAYA', 'Glow', 'School Life' and '4419' – showed a range of hip-hop and R&B sounds from a long list of producers, Armadillo, Tobias Karlsson and Brandon Lowry among them: Han's group 3RACHA also received a credit. *Mixtape* scored high chart positions in Japan, New Zealand, Hungary and on the US Billboard World Albums chart, paving the way for the *I Am...* EPs cycle.

# UNVEIL

## [08.01 : I am NOT]

# THE DEBUT SHOWCASE

**After launching the Stray Kids concept with the *Mixtape* EP, JYP Entertainment wanted to debut its new band with a major event – and so the date of 25 March 2018 was set for the grand unveiling of their next release, *I Am NOT*. The EP itself was scheduled to appear the following day. Thanks to the success of *Mixtape*, expectations were running high for Stray Kids, JYPE's first new boy band in four years: Billboard magazine had even named them one of five K-pop bands to watch out for in 2018. For that reason, Jangchung Stadium in Seoul was chosen as the venue for the debut event, labelled 'Stray Kids Unveil: Op. 01: I Am Not'. In a press conference before the nine musicians hit the stage, Bang Chan told the media: "We are very grateful for how our seniors have paved the way for us. Our biggest goal for this year is to win a rookie award." From the reaction of the audience, who gave the set that followed a huge welcome, that goal seemed inevitable. The stage was set...**

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## I AM NOT

***I Am NOT***, released on 26 March 2018, is either Stray Kids' first or second EP, depending on how you categorise it: their previous release, ***Mixtape***, came out two months earlier and was intended as a 'pre-debut' taster of their music. The first of three EPs that explore the concept of identity, ***I Am NOT*** sold over 54,000 physical copies in its first week on sale and eventually went platinum in South Korea, selling 250,000 units. It reached number four in its home country and also scored highly in New Zealand and on the US World Albums chart. The lead single, 'District 9', also did well, reaching the Top Ten in America.

So those are the figures – but what did the music actually sound like? Well, for the crazy side of Stray Kids, look no further than the fully-leaded EDM of 'District 9' and 'Awaken', but if you're looking for less combative tunes, go with 'Mirror' and 'NOT!', while classic boy-band pop can be heard in 'Grow Up'. True fans will track down a physical copy of ***I Am NOT***, because it contains a bonus track, 'Mixtape #1'.

©Getty

## FIRST OVERSEAS APPEARANCE

Have you ever been to KCON? If not, put it on your to-do list. A yearly convention that operates in several countries worldwide, KCON has been showcasing Korean music and arts since 2012, with the aim of publicising the country's culture to global audiences. Stray Kids first appeared at the event in 2018, performing at the Makuhari Messe venue's M Countdown Stage in Chiba, Japan on 14 April. They then flew to the USA to perform at that year's American KCON, playing at the Prudential Center in Newark, New Jersey on 23 June. Finally, they hit Bangkok, Thailand on 29 September, documenting the plane rides, hotels, airport shuttles – and jet lag! – in video diaries. Wonder what they did with all those air miles?

©Alamy

## ‘STAY’ FANCLUB ANNOUNCED

**Become a member of STAY, Stray Kids’ official fan club, and you’re in for a treat. As well as receiving exclusive merchandise packages, members get to interact with the guys in a variety of ways, primarily at online events on JYP’s version of the Bubble app, vlogs and a private bulletin board. STAY is named after the fanbase themselves, and has been operated in three ‘generations’ – the first from early 2019 to spring 2021 through the VLIVE platform. The second generation was labelled ‘You Make Stray Kids STAY’ and ran from October 2021 to autumn ’22. The current generation, ‘Home Sweet Home’, will continue to November 2023, this time on the Yes24 app. You’re in for a ton of cool SKZ memorabilia if you sign up – as many unboxing videos on YouTube reveal...**

@Getty

# I AM WHO

***I Am WHO*** **was Stray Kids' second post-debut EP and was released digitally and physically with a launch event on 6 August 2018, in either 'I am' or 'WHO' versions – appropriate since its seven songs deal with finding identity, the songwriters having questioned the subject on the previous release,** ***I Am NOT.*** **The music, credited mostly to 3RACHA, ranged from fully-leaded EDM on the first single 'My Pace', via mellower balladry on 'Insomnia' and 'M.I.A', to a mixture of both styles on 'Voices'. A second single, 'Awkward Silence', was a classic slice of boy-band pop, and the mixture of styles met with public approval, with the EP selling 80,000 physical copies in a single month and hitting number three in South Korea and number five on the US Billboard World Albums chart.**

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# I AM YOU

**It's fair to say that 2018 was a heck of a year for Stray Kids, with a TV show, a debut, live dates, a KCON – plus the small matter of a three-EP cycle. The third of these, *I Am YOU*, completed the theme of searching for identity and was just as popular as the previous releases, selling 76,547 physical copies in the month of October after its Stray Kids Unveil: Op. 03: I Am YOU showcase. Available in 'I am' and 'YOU' versions, with a bonus cut of 'Mixtape #3' on the physical release, the EP gave us seven more tracks: this time the sounds were a little tougher, focusing on EDM beats and textures more than relaxed love songs. Check 'My Side' for evidence, although 'Hero's Soup' is a subtler R&B blend and the title cut – also the first single – is a workout for the group's rapping skills. The EP made number two on the Korean chart: could Stray Kids maintain this progress in 2019?**

LIBRE
BEAUTE
LIBRE
BEAUTE
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## BRAND AMBASSADORS

**Like many K-pop idols, Stray Kids have been models and ambassadors for several brands. Even before the group debuted, JYPE had signed them up as models for Jambangee Jeans' spring 2018 collection, and a few months later they were on the catwalk for Ivy Club schoolwear. By the end of the year they were signed up with the Coca-Cola-owned Minute Maid sparkling drinks range and also promoting the Korean CGV Youth Brand Festival.**

**Even then, they were just getting stuck into the mountain of brand endorsements that were coming their way. In 2019, Stray Kids repped the domestic Lotte Duty Free boutique stores, the sportswear brand Pro-Specs, and the Talk Talk Korea Contest. Biggest of all, though, they became ambassadors for the Culture and Information Service arm of their country's Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism. In 2020 and 2021, they signed on the dotted line with Shopee Indonesia, Clio Cosmetics, the Japanese clothing brand Wego, the Korea Pavilion of Expo 2020 Dubai and the cosmetic brand Nacific. The following year they represented the clothing brand MAHAGRID and the Philippine designers, Bench, while they also became ambassadors for Tommy Hilfiger's 2023 Fall campaign.**

**In terms of sub-unit and individual campaigns, the DANCERACHA sub-unit – Lee Know, Hyunjin and Felix – represented the Italian brand Etro's unisex Earthbeat sports shoes in 2021. In July 2023, Hyunjin was announced as the global brand ambassador for Versace and he starred in their 2023 Holiday campaign, as well as becoming a fixture at their fashion shows. Meanwhile, Felix was chosen as an ambassador for Louis Vuitton and he even made his runway debut for the fashion house in 2024.**

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8th
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제8회 가온
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아이돌Live
Melon
U-NEXT
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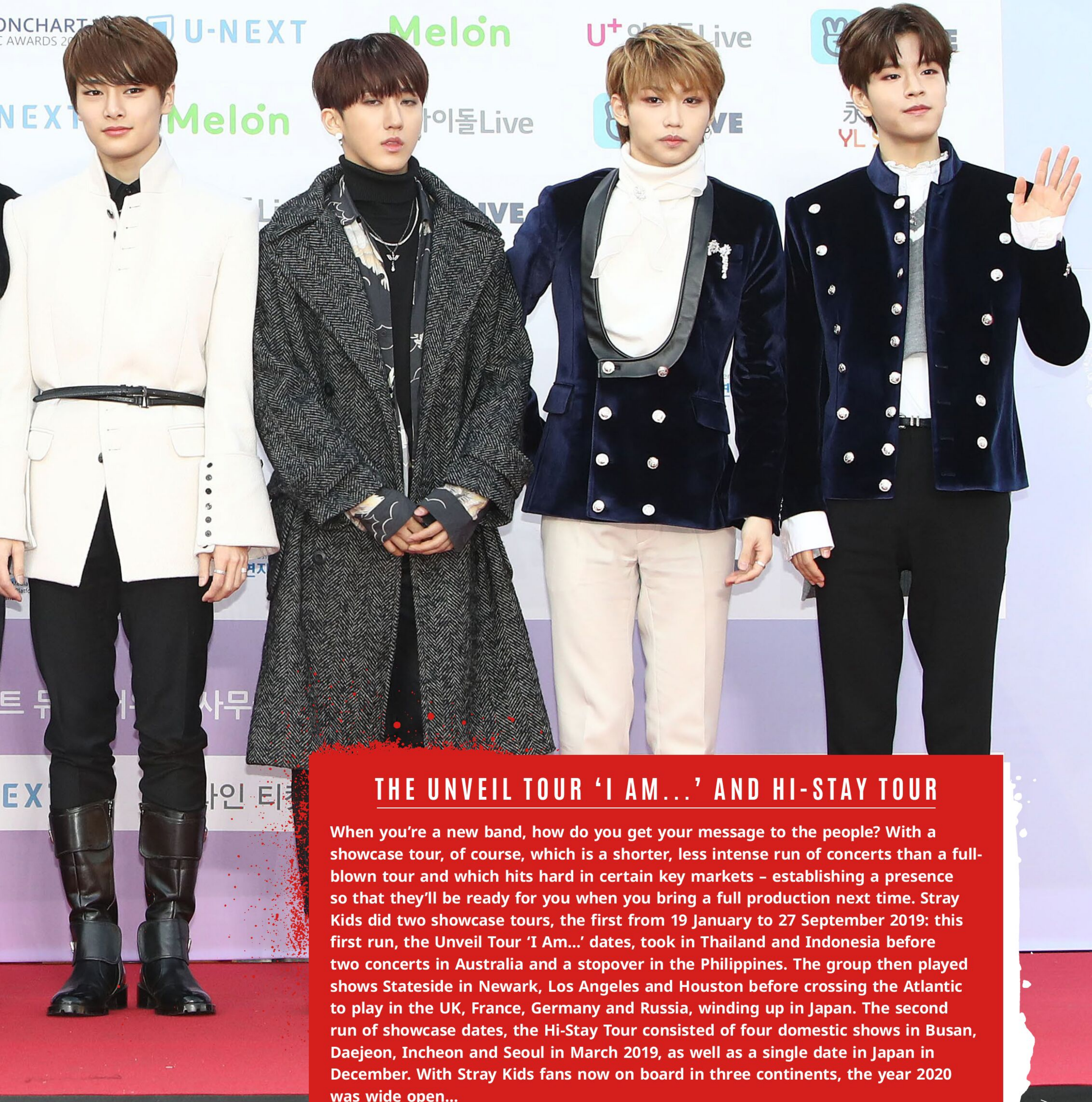


## THE UNVEIL TOUR ‘I AM...’ AND HI-STAY TOUR

When you’re a new band, how do you get your message to the people? With a showcase tour, of course, which is a shorter, less intense run of concerts than a full-blown tour and which hits hard in certain key markets – establishing a presence so that they’ll be ready for you when you bring a full production next time. Stray Kids did two showcase tours, the first from 19 January to 27 September 2019: this first run, the Unveil Tour ‘I Am...’ dates, took in Thailand and Indonesia before two concerts in Australia and a stopover in the Philippines. The group then played shows Stateside in Newark, Los Angeles and Houston before crossing the Atlantic to play in the UK, France, Germany and Russia, winding up in Japan. The second run of showcase dates, the Hi-Stay Tour consisted of four domestic shows in Busan, Daejeon, Incheon and Seoul in March 2019, as well as a single date in Japan in December. With Stray Kids fans now on board in three continents, the year 2020 was wide open...

©Getty

## CLÉ 1: MIROH

**Finally, a Korean number one came Stray Kids' way with the release of their fourth EP, *Clé 1: MIROH,* released on 25 March 2019 to tie in with the first anniversary of the group's debut. Can it really only have been a single year since then? Fans loved the new music, especially the lead single, 'MIROH', a dancefloor banger. The industry agreed with them, as you'll see from the *M Countdown* entry coming up next, and overseas fans were fully converted too. The EP made number 15 in Japan, hit high on three different US charts, and – a first for Stray Kids – broke into the UK Downloads chart, this country having finally woken up to Hallyu, the new wave of modern Korean culture.**

©Alamy

## FIRST MUSIC SHOW WIN

**You'll be familiar with music charts and the TV, radio and internet shows that accompany them in your home country, of course, but you've probably never seen a show like *M Countdown*, broadcast on South Korea's MNET network. Sure, it features live performances, presenters and music features like every other music show, from *Top Of The Pops* to *The X Factor* and beyond, but its real function – a hugely important one to its domestic market – is to announce the country's most popular song that week. It's how the winning song is judged that makes *M Countdown* unique, with a combination of digital music sales, physical album sales, social media performance, global fan votes, MNET's own broadcast score , and a live vote from viewers, all of which take place during the show. All of which leads us to Stray Kids, whose song 'MIROH' won *M Countdown* for the first time on 4 April 2019. Check YouTube: you can see the members' reactions, from tears to shock to elation, right there on camera as the result is announced. At that moment, Korea celebrated the group as the country's very best: it doesn't get better than that.**

©Alamy

## DISTRICT 9: UNLOCK WORLD TOUR

**Did the title 'District 9' refer to the 2009 science fiction movie, an urban area in the Hunger Games universe, or something else entirely? Either way, it was the name of Stray Kids' first world tour, announced on 30 September 2019 during promotion for the single 'Double Knot' and between the releases of *Clé 2: YELLOW WOOD* and *Clé: LEVANTER*. The tour, properly named District 9: Unlock, was set to run from 23 November that year to 15 August 2020 – except, as we now know, a certain virus had other plans.**

**Before COVID struck at the end of 2019 and forced everyone to stay on the sofa for the next two years, Stray Kids played shows in Seoul and eight US cities including New York. The last of these took place in LA on 16 February, by which time it was becoming obvious that further dates would be impractical, and so the European and Asian legs of the tour were cancelled. Our gang headed home – but a band like this doesn't give up that easily.**

©Getty

## CLÉ 2: YELLOW WOOD

**So what's a 'special album', anyway? In the K-pop market, it's a repackage of previously-released material, boosted with new music to tempt the fan into adding it to their collection. Stray Kids' first release of this kind, and also their fifth EP, was *Clé 2: YELLOW WOOD*, issued digitally and physically on 19 June 2019. In addition to the *Mixtape* cuts that had only been previously available on physical editions of the earlier EPs, they gave us three beats-heavy new songs – 'Road Not Taken', the single 'Side Effects' and 'TMT'. It was the last Stray Kids release to feature Woojin, who departed on 28 October 2019: it was a respectable hit in Japan, Poland, the US and of course Korea, where it reached second place on the charts.**

©Getty

## SEOUL FASHION WEEK

Here's I.N and Hyunjin, saying hello to the public at Seoul Fashion Week on 17 October 2019, a week before Woojin announced his departure from Stray Kids. The three fashion fans would have known that their fellow Kid was on his way out at this stage, and chose to present a calm, consolidated front at one of their country's most prestigious cultural events. As a matter of fact, K-pop stars are now commonly seen at Seoul Fashion Week: at the 2024 F/W event, paparazzi cameras were clicking at the sight of the girl group NewJeans (who were also ambassadors for the event), soloist and former IZ*ONE member Lee Chae Yeon, Eunha, SinB and Umji of VIVIZ, Saerom and Jiheon of fromis_9 and many more.

©Getty

## CLÉ: LEVANTER

**Five EPs into their two-year career, Stray Kids were showing no signs of slowing down, with the *Clé: LEVANTER* EP appearing on 9 December 2019, the month before the scheduled release of its successor, *Step Out Of Clé*. The EP had originally been planned for release on 25 November, but the news of Woojin's departure from the group a month before caused JYPE to re-record his vocal parts and push the release date back. Still, three singles kept the fans happy, with 'Double Knot' released on 9 October, 'Astronaut' on 14 November, and 'Levanter' on the same day as the EP. The announcement of the 2020 world tour was also big news, so as 2019 ended, Stray Kids were in a great place – helped no doubt by the chart-topping performance of *Clé: LEVANTER*, which did well in the usual territories and made new inroads into Spain and Belgium. The SKZ brand was slowly but surely taking over the world...**

©Getty

## JAPANESE DEBUT AND GO LIVE

**"All right, – first we hit the domestic market, then we do Japan, then it's the USA!" would be our words if we were managing a massive K-pop band, and indeed Stray Kids appear to have done just that. After converting Korea to the SKZ cause with six EPs in 2018 and '19, the time was right to woo Japan, the world's biggest market for K-pop, with a concerted marketing campaign. This kicked off on 18 March 2020 with the Japanese release of *SKZ2020*, a compilation album of a mighty 27 formerly-released songs, remixed to remove vocal tracks from the departed Woojin. Released in first press, regular, time-limited and cassette versions, the album debuted at number three in Japan – a resounding success.**

**Three months later a major milestone was reached: the release of Stray Kids' first full-length studio album, in other words not an EP, not a reissue and not a compilation. *GO LIVE* was released on 17 June 2020, and hit the top of the Korean charts, while its lead single 'God's Menu' was a minor hit. A retitled version of the album in September added eight new tracks under the title In Life. The lead single, 'Back Door', was an international success and was named one of 2020's Top 10 songs by none other than *TIME* magazine. With chart positions in 15 countries, Stray Kids were now that rare thing – a global brand.**

©Alamy

## COVID PANDEMIC

**See anyone missing in this photo from January 2020? It was taken at the ninth Gaon Chart Music Awards, not an event which any Stray Kid worth his salt would miss – but two members are absent, Seungmin and Han. At least one of them was suffering from influenza, perhaps a portent of the dreadful two years to come, when COVID-19 reduced the live music scene to zero and we were all forced to interact with each other through screens. In the case of Stray Kids, members of the band were hit by the disease at various points in 2022, but fortunately none of them suffered seriously – and now that that the pandemic is in the rear view mirror, let's hope that we can enjoy their live performances for many years to come.**

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9th
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MUSIC AWARDS 2019
Federation of Korean Music Performers
한국음악실연자연합회
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방송 :
중계 :
TO
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## NOEASY

**As you can see from this photo of Stray Kids performing for President Moon Jae-In at Korea's National Day at EXPO 2020 in Dubai, the band had enjoyed a pretty successful first two years – but on 23 August 2021, their profile went stratospheric. On that day, their second studio album *NOEASY* was released, unleashing the single 'Thunderous', which went on to win no fewer than six music shows. Over 14 tracks of hip-hop, EDM and R&B, many of which were devoted to the subject of hardship (hence "no easy"), the record completely convinced old and new SKZ fans, reaching number one in Korea and entering the top 20 in ten other countries. It became the first million-seller for Stray Kids – and scooped Best Album at the Korean Golden Disc awards. Hardships, you say? Nothing that couldn't be overcome.**

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## CHRISTMAS EVEL AND SKZ2021

**Seasonal albums never do well commercially, right? Wrong. Take Stray Kids' 29 November 2021 record, *Christmas EveL* – pronounced 'Christmas Evil', but don't worry, it's meant as a joke. With four tracks to enjoy as you decorated your Christmas tree, it was more of a glorified single than an album, but how much Yuletide music does anyone need? Mind you, it went triple platinum – 750,000 copies – so the public must have been keen.**

**More significantly, Stray Kids issued a new compilation for the Japanese market on 23 December the same year. Titled *SKZ2021*, it contained 14 new recordings of previously-released songs, and was led off by the Korean version of 'Scars' as the lead single. The Japanese fanbase pushed it all the way to number five on their domestic chart, proving that old songs can be just as effective as new ones.**

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## ODDINARY

**We're all ordinary people, but at the same time most of us are a bit odd – hence the title of Stray Kids' sixth EP, released on 18 March 2022. The first release on their new label, Republic Records, *ODDINARY* contained seven tracks, most of them written and produced by 3RACHA, Stray Kids' in-house creative team. By now the world had woken up to K-pop, and the EP enjoyed chart-topping status in Korea, Finland, Poland and the US, as well as breaking into the top ten in eight other countries and selling over 1.7 million copies. As for its sound? Take a listen to the lead single, 'Maniac', an electropop anthem with trap elements, for an indicator of where SKZ were at in '22: in other words, on top of the world.**

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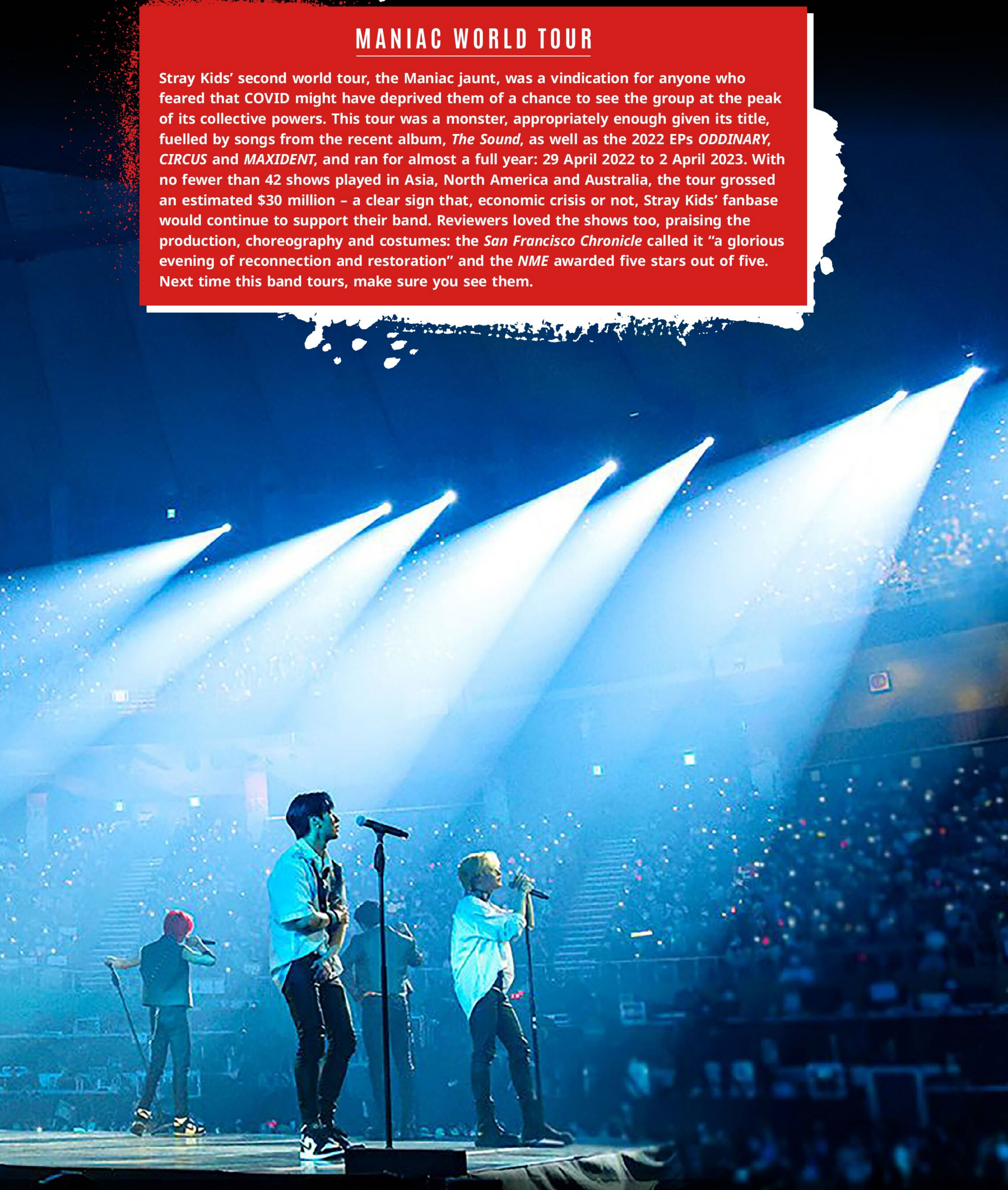
## MANIAC WORLD TOUR

**Stray Kids' second world tour, the Maniac jaunt, was a vindication for anyone who feared that COVID might have deprived them of a chance to see the group at the peak of its collective powers. This tour was a monster, appropriately enough given its title, fuelled by songs from the recent album, *The Sound*, as well as the 2022 EPs *ODDINARY*, *CIRCUS* and *MAXIDENT*, and ran for almost a full year: 29 April 2022 to 2 April 2023. With no fewer than 42 shows played in Asia, North America and Australia, the tour grossed an estimated $30 million – a clear sign that, economic crisis or not, Stray Kids' fanbase would continue to support their band. Reviewers loved the shows too, praising the production, choreography and costumes: the *San Francisco Chronicle* called it "a glorious evening of reconnection and restoration" and the *NME* awarded five stars out of five. Next time this band tours, make sure you see them.**



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## CIRCUS AND SEOUL FIESTA OPENING 2022

**After two years of being stuck at home, we all felt like a party in 2022 – and Stray Kids evidently felt the same, opening the Seoul Fiesta event on 10 August 2022 with an energetic performance that showed no sign of tiredness after many months on the road. The group had plenty to celebrate over and above the resumption of cultural activity in their home country, of course, with the recent release of their second Japanese-language EP, *CIRCUS*, two months before. A platinum seller – do Stray Kids releases ever sell less? – the EP was a hip-hop and trap-based collection led off by singles of the title track plus 'Your Eyes' and the Japanese version of 'Maniac'. "It will blow away all the heat of summer," promised Bang Chan, and you'd better believe him.**

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Stray Kids
MINI ALBUM
MAXIDENT

# MAXIDENT

Stray Kids' seventh EP, *MAXIDENT*, may sound like a brand of toothpaste, but in fact the title is a portmanteau of 'maximum' and either 'incident' or 'accident' – but the music is fresh and wakes you up in the morning, so perhaps there's something to the analogy after all? Released on 7 October 2022, *MAXIDENT* was an instant number one in Korea, Poland and the US, selling an astonishing three million copies, even though some of its sounds were new and somewhat experimental. The lead single 'CASE 143' is a case in point, with weird-but-cool synth textures and sudden style switches from hard to smooth and back again, as well as unusual melodies that few fans would expect. Respect to SKZ and their team for heading to pastures new and reaping commercial rewards at the same time.

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## WINNING AWARDS

If there's a collective mantelpiece at Stray Kids HQ, it will need to be a long one – as the group has a huge number of awards and trophies to place on it. Even as far back as 2018, SKZ took home six new artist awards, including Best New Male Artist at that year's MNET Asian Music Awards, Best New Artist at the Golden Disc Awards, and Rookie Of The Year at the Seoul Music Awards and Asia Artist Awards. Multiply that by nine members and that means a potential 54 awards to stick in SKZ's hand luggage...

In 2019, a major bonsang award came for the *I Am WHO* EP, as well as a Global Fan's Choice nomination for 'My Pace', and the same year the group won the Star15 Popularity Award at the Asia Artist awards. In 2020, Stray Kids received their greatest honour to date when they were given the ultimate prize – a daesang, or 'grand prize' – at the 29th Seoul Music Awards for *Clé 1: MIROH* EP.

These are just the tip of the iceberg: space doesn't permit us to list the dozens of awards, let alone the nominations, that have come Stray Kids' way. Let's just say that this group is now a phenomenon, and that we salute their many achievements.

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## THE SOUND

**It's album number three for Stray Kids – and *The Sound* is a blast from start to finish. You'll recognise some of the songs in one form or other from previous EPs, but that won't diminish your enjoyment. A Japanese-language album, the ten-track record was issued on 22 February 2023 and revolves around the concept of an orchestra, complete with classical instruments at strategic moments. Japan loved *The Sound*, as revealed by the album's debut position at number one, perhaps because the record covers so much ground. Hip-hop, EDM, and heavy rock guitar riffs are all thrown into the mix, and the rapping and singing has never sounded more accomplished.**

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Stray Kids JAPAN 1st Album

THE SOUND

2023.2.22 Release!!

#StrayKids #スキズ #スキズ_1ST_ALBUM

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## 5-STAR

**In June 2023, Stray Kids released their third studio album, *5-Star*, to the delight of STAYs. The album's lead single 'S-Class', is a primarily hip-hop track that was written by 3RACHA and lyrically discusses the band's uniqueness and confidence. It was another smash hit for Stray Kids and the song won the award for Best K-pop Video at the 2023 MTV Video Music Awards – the group's reaction to winning went viral as they looked adorably surprised. The album topped the charts in several countries, including South Korea and the United States, becoming their third consecutive chart-topper in the latter. On top of this, *5-Star* was named the second best-selling album globally in 2023. They went on to perform their all-dome concert tour, the 5-Star Dome Tour, from August to October in South Korea and Japan.**

BEST
K-POP

# HEADLINING LOLLAPALOOZA

**Stray Kids made history in July 2023 when they became the first K-pop artist to headline the Lollapalooza festival in Paris. The group performed to an audience of around 60,000 people, playing a medley of their biggest hits including 'MANIAC', 'God's Menu', and 'Thunderous', and were praised for their live vocals. After taking a break and interacting with members of the crowd, the sub-unit 3RACHA took the stage to perform their song 'HEYDAY', before the whole group then reunited to perform 'S-Class', 'TOPLINE', 'Super Bowl', and 'ITEM' from their album 5-Star, as well as other fan favourites like 'CHEESE' and 'My Pace'.**

# ROCK-STAR

**In November 2023, Stray Kids released their eighth Korean EP *ROCK-STAR*, which came five months after the release of *5-Star*. The album features a powerful mix of rock, electronica, hip-hop and ballads, and was another phenomenal success. It reached the number one spot in several countries, including the United States, South Korea, Japan, Greece and Hungary. The lead single from the album, 'LALALALA', is an upbeat and energetic track that incorporates phonk and Afrobeat elements. The song's lyrics encourage listeners to let go of their worries and enjoy life. This single was a significant milestone in Stray Kids' remarkable career as it became their first song to chart on the Billboard Hot 100.**

## WHAT'S NEXT?

**Stray Kids had an incredible year in 2023 and they show no signs of slowing down in 2024. They have already held fan meetings in South Korea and Japan, performed at the Le Gala des Pièces Jaunes charity event in Paris and collaborated with their fellow JYP artists Itzy, Nmixx, and J.Y. Park for the promotional song 'Like Magic' for Coca-Cola. Stray Kids are working on two new releases – a special album and an album – and planning their third world tour. They will also headline the festivals BST Hyde Park in London and I-Days in Milan in July, as well as Lollapalooza in Chicago the following month.**

The Ultimate

# Stray Kids

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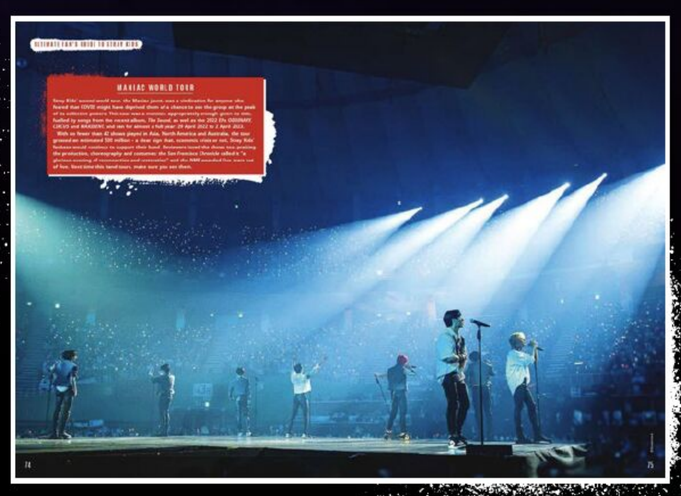
**Relive Stray Kids' debut and their domestic breakthrough**

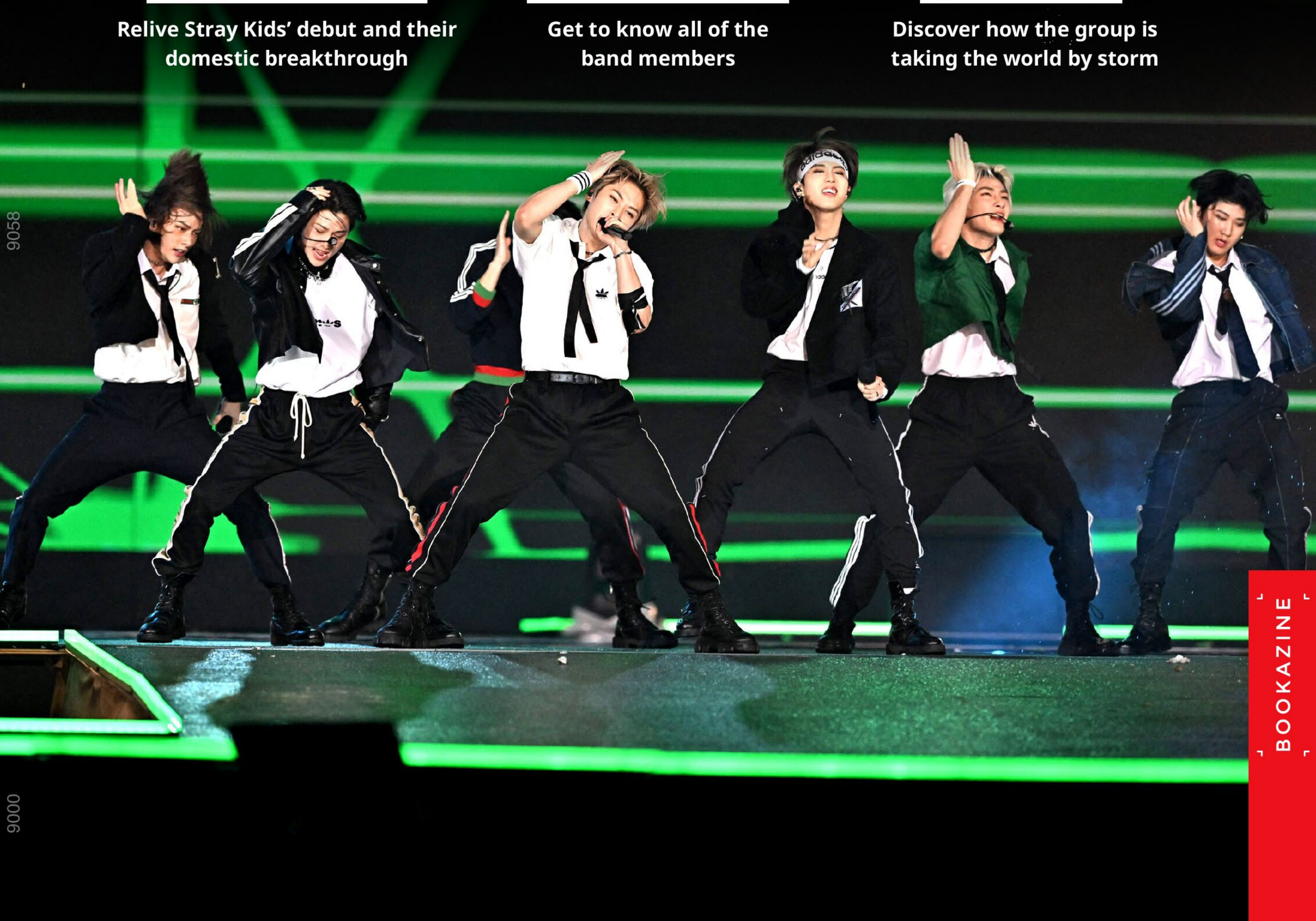
### BEHIND THE MUSIC

**Get to know all of the band members**




### RISING STARS

**Discover how the group is taking the world by storm**



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